

1 Samuel 17:1-27 - Thursday, March 27th, 2014

- By way of introduction, I can't even begin to tell you how packed this chapter is with powerful and profound application to our lives today.
- In a way, we'll be going to Israel on a virtual tour of sorts, in the sense that some of us have actually been to the very place this took place.
- More specifically, the Valley of Elah, which I'm sure those who went have many pictures of, similar to the one that I'll put up on the screen.

- The reason being is by having the visual we're better able to understand what we're about to read in the first three verses of the chapter.
- Namely the strategic location and dare I say occupation of land belonging to Israel on the part of the Philistines who had taken it from them.
- This will become germane to our understanding why it is and how it is that a very young David is given the victory over a very large Goliath.

(1) Now the Philistines gathered their armies together to battle, and were gathered at Sochoh, which *belongs* to Judah; they encamped between Sochoh and Azekah, in Ephes Dammim. (2) And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and they encamped in the Valley of Elah, and drew up in battle array against the Philistines. (3) The Philistines stood on a mountain on one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side, with a valley between them.

- I'm hoping the photo on the screen will help you to picture in your minds eye the location of both the camps of the Philistines and Israelites.
- There's a couple of things I want to point out here, the first of which is, as I mentioned before, the Philistines were occupying Israel's land.
- In other words the Philistines had taken that which belonged to God's people and as such, we find our first take away by way of application.

- Here's what I'm thinking, like with what the Philistines did to the Israelites, don't allow the enemy to take that which God has given to you.
- By that I mean, often times we as Christians will unnecessarily relinquish to the enemy, who's a thief and liar that which God has given to us.
- While we'll see this play out in the verses that follow, it's important to note Israel would never take all of the Promised-Land God gave them.

- God gave Israel 300,000 square miles of land, but the most Israel ever possessed was about 30,000 square miles under King Solomon.
- By the way, the size of Israel today is just a little shy of a measly 8,000 square miles, a mere fraction of that which God had given to them.
- Here's where I'm going with all of this, while there are some 3,000 promises in the Bible, we're prone to possess only a fraction of them.

(4) And a champion went out from the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, from Gath, whose height *was* six cubits and a span. (5) He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he *was* armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat *was* five thousand shekels of bronze. (6) And *he had* bronze armor on his legs and a bronze javelin between his shoulders. (7) Now the staff of his spear *was* like a weaver's beam, and his iron spearhead *weighed* six hundred shekels; and a shield-bearer went before him.

- If these verses make it sound like Goliath was a very huge monster of a man, that's because Goliath was a very huge monster of a man.
- It's believed he was probably over nine feet tall, and he would have to be very muscular to wield weaponry weighing some 200 pounds.
- The thought is that Goliath was one of the Anakim left in Gath, which we studied when we were back in the book of Joshua chapter 11:22.

Henry Morris - "Goliath was well over nine feet tall, one of the last of the Anakim race of giants, still residing in Gath."

- Be that as it may, there is another take away from this, which is how easy we as believers can over estimate the strength of the enemy.
- Moreover, we can, in so doing also over estimate the size of our problems making them into Goliath's, which seem impossible to overcome.
- One of the lessons I'm learning in my walk with the Lord is that my God is a big God, and there's nothing and no situation to hard for Him.

Genesis 18:14 KJV Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

Jeremiah 32:27 NKJV "Behold, I *am* the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?"

(8) Then he stood and cried out to the armies of Israel, and said to them, "Why have you come out to line up for battle? *Am* I not a Philistine, and you the servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. (9) If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us." (10) And the Philistine said, "I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together." (11) When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is how utterly terrified Saul and all Israel were when they heard his words.
- The reason I point this out is because it speaks to the power of words to either create within us faith or fear, or worse yet even life or death.
- So powerful are words, as far as Saul and all Israel were concerned, they feared that more than they did his enormous size and strength.

Proverbs 18:21 NKJV Death and life *are* in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.

Romans 10:17 NKJV So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

- Another reason Saul in particularly was so afraid was because he was king, and taller and bigger than most and as such the logical choice.
- The question becomes, why didn't Saul courageously demonstrate his military leadership and fight Goliath? Answer, the Spirit had left him.
- In other words, when we disobey God and grieve the Holy Spirit in our lives, we will lose the strength and courage that comes from God.

Charles Surgeon - "Israel had sinned, and her king had cast off his allegiance, and therefore chastisement came. God has the hearts of wicked Philistines in His hands, and can move them to be a scourge to His offending people. O, had Israel been faithful to her God, she would soon have been delivered, for then the promise would have been fulfilled, 'five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight.' When God is gone, the strongest are as weak as water. ...Time was when Saul, who was himself gigantic, would have accepted the challenge, but when God departs from a man he becomes a coward. 'Without me ye can do nothing,' is a great truth. Many have learned it to their sorrow."

(12) Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem Judah, whose name was Jesse, and who had eight sons. And the man was old, advanced in years, in the days of Saul. (13) The three oldest sons of Jesse had gone to follow Saul to the battle. The names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. (14) David was the youngest. And the three oldest followed Saul. (15) But David occasionally went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

- Here we're told that David will enter the scene, and quite frankly, not a moment too soon. Now there's no need to fear, little David is here.
- You'll forgive the humorous in the midst of what's arguably very serious but I can't get over the stark contrast between king Saul and David.
- Not only is he the youngest of eight sons, but his three oldest brothers are on the battle field with Saul, which means they're fearful as Saul.

- The reason I say that is because Eliab Abinadab and Shammah don't volunteer to accept Goliath's challenge so as to deliver the Israelites.
- Another striking contrast is the oldest brothers and Israel's king is fearful on the battlefield whereas David is fearless in the shepherd's field.
- Perhaps this explains why David is referred to as "God's firstborn," such that he had earned that position and title, whereas Eliab had not.

Psalm 89:27 NKJV Also I will make him *My* firstborn, The highest of the kings of the earth.

(16) And the Philistine drew near and presented himself forty days, morning and evening. (17) Then Jesse said to his son David, "Take now for your brothers an ephah of this dried grain and these ten loaves, and run to your brothers at the camp. (18) And carry these ten cheeses to the captain of *their* thousand, and see how your brothers fare, and bring back news of them." (19) Now Saul and they and all the men of Israel were in the Valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines. (20) So David rose early in the morning, left the sheep with a keeper, and took the things and went as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the camp as the army was going out to the fight and shouting for the battle. (21) For Israel and the Philistines had drawn up in battle array, army against army.

- I need to draw your attention to something here that will prove to be very significant, as we'll see shortly, when David arrives on the scene.
- It's in verse sixteen where it says Goliath did this every day and night for a total of forty days, which is the number of testing and judgment.
- It's for this reason the pages of Holy Writ are replete with passage after passage associating a period of forty with judgment and testing.

- In his book, Biblical Mathematics, Ed Vallowe cites eight great periods of testing's in the Word of God.

1. Moses was in the mountain of Sinai forty days and nights receiving the law. (Exodus 24:18)
2. Israel fell under this forty days of testing that led to the making of the golden calf. (Exodus 32:2-7)
3. The Israelites were tried forty years in the wilderness. (Numbers 14:34)
4. Forty days Elijah spent in Horeb after his experience on Mt. Carmel. (1 Kings 19:8)
5. Forty days, Jonah preached judgment would come to the city of Ninevah. (Jonah 3:4)
6. Forty Days Ezekiel laid on his right side to symbolize the forty years of Judah's transgression. (Ezekiel 4:6)
7. Our Savior was tempted forty days and nights by the Devil. (Luke 4:1-2)
8. Forty days Jesus was seen of His disciples speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. (Acts 1:3)

"Biblical Mathematics," Ed Vallowe, pp. 174, 175

- There's something else here I want to point out before we get to verse twenty-two, and it has to do with what we're told in verse twenty.
- Notice it says that David rose early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper before doing as his father Jesse had commanded him.
- The point being is that he was truly a man after God's own heart, as evidenced by his shepherd's heart in make sure the flock was tended.

Charles Spurgeon - "He as a good shepherd and did not leave his sheep without a keeper, in this being a fit type of the great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls."

(22) And David left his supplies in the hand of the supply keeper, ran to the army, and came and greeted his brothers. (23) Then as he talked with them, there was the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, coming up from the armies of the Philistines; and he spoke according to the same words. So David heard them. (24) And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were dreadfully afraid.

- This just keeps getting better by the verse! Notice that when David arrives and is talking with them Goliath starts talking smack once again.
- The reason I point that out is because all the men of Israel were "dreadfully afraid," but of David we are simply told that he had heard them.
- In other words, that which the men of Israel had been terrified hearing for forty days and nights, David doesn't flinch hearing it the first time.

- Actually, as we'll see next, instead of David becoming fearful, he becomes angry; with a righteous anger for this uncircumcised Philistine.
- By the way, it's interesting to note that never once does David call him by his name Goliath; rather he calls him an uncircumcised Philistine.
- Lest you think this is an insignificant and nebulous detail, let me hasten to say Goliath means champion, and to David, he's no champion.

(25) So the men of Israel said, "Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel; and it shall be *that* the man who kills him the king will enrich with great riches, will give him his daughter, and give his father's house exemption from taxes in Israel." (26) Then David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying, "What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" (27) And the people answered him in this manner, saying, "So shall it be done for the man who kills him."

- Unfortunately, we will have to pick it up here next week, Lord willing, this because, we're at a pivotal point in this most fascinating account.
- However, I do want to leave you with a thought here concerning what David says in verse twenty-six after hearing Goliath only one time.
- Namely, "who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" Suffice it to say, for David this isn't okay!